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Wandering Wheels Newsletter

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Wandering Wheels Newsletter, April 1984

Wandering Wheels

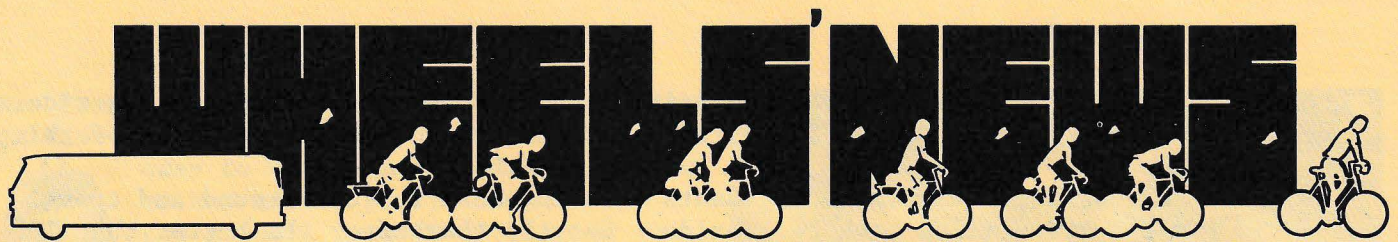
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Recommended Citation

Wandering Wheels, "Wandering Wheels Newsletter, April 1984" (1984). *Wandering Wheels Newsletter*. 4. <https://pillars.taylor.edu/wanderingwheels-newsletter/4>

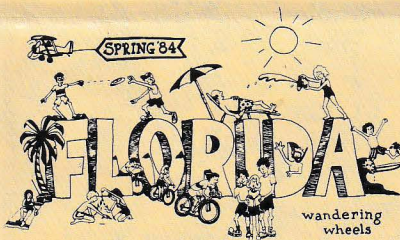
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WHEELS' NEWS



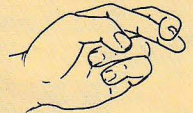
April 1984

Happy Spring to our WW friends!



Back in the spring of 1970 we started what has now become our yearly migration to Florida. At the time, we were just wanting to get away. The plan was to do the "bike thing" and expect ministry as a natural spinoff. That first nine-day trip has grown from servicing Taylor to working with several sister colleges and church youth groups during spring vacation periods.

The requests for this year's spring bike trips in Florida started coming in late last spring and by late winter of this past year we had five teams signed up: North Park College, College of St. Francis, Taylor University, Spring Arbor College, and Arlington Heights Evangelical Free Church (North Park, St. Francis, and Arlington Heights are all located in the Chicago area and Spring Arbor is in Michigan). In all, nearly 250 participated. This involved 15,000 miles of bus travel just to get the "gangs" down and back. The bicyclists pedaled a combined total of 1,000 miles. These are the most dangerous kind of miles, however. On these trips most are novice riders and about the time you get one team trained they go home and bang, you have a new team to train! I told Sue prior to the start of the trips, "I can't imagine getting through this spring in one piece!" You'd better believe that I had my spiritual fingers crossed. I genuinely praise God for the unusual protection we experienced!



At one point we had 180 people assembled in a park along the East Coast of Florida. Sixty Taylor students were ready to head home. The buses that brought the Arlington and Spring Arbor kids to Florida would turn around and haul the Taylor students back to Indiana. In other words, two groups jumped off the buses and three hours later were riding bikes and the old group was heading north on the buses! The staff literally said



"goodbye" to one team, turned around and said "hello" to new and much expecting riders. I need to sing the praises of the staff for their ability to handle this kind of thing.

After the buses got the Taylor students home they had to turn around and travel deadhead (empty) 1,200 miles back to Florida. Shortly thereafter the better than 100 riders left in Florida were transported home to the midwest. Whew, doesn't that tire you out?

We spent our time on the East Coast between Fort Lauderdale and New Smyrna Beach. God has given us some good friends along that coast and our ministry has been GOOD. Our most effective ministry, however, is still that which takes place within the group.



NORTH PARK COLLEGE

North Park is of a Swedish Covenant denomination. It's good to be with these young people and to see their tie with family from the "old country". The family bond and familiarity with the denominational history are encouraging. North Park students closed out their tour by singing to the congregation of the

Coronado United Methodist Church in New Smyrna Beach. Even though our bike groups are not choirs, I believe that those who hear them sing could not be more encouraged. I am growing more and more impressed with the importance of encouraging the "retirement community". (Maybe that's because I am nearing the senior citizen years, myself!)



North Park put the bug in the ear of regarding our spring bike trips in Florida.

Consequently, they signed on for their first trip with us. St. Francis recruited not only from the college, but also from the community, so their ranks were filled with non-students, as well as students. This was our first predominately Catholic cycling group. We hit it off well! In fact, they were the INSPIRATION of the spring tours! They responded so well to the teaching that took place. Three of the non-student participants were "older" gals from Joliet. They would not give their ages, but like me, they are not "spring chickens"!! In fact, I wasn't sure they could make the whole trip. One of them had a sizable bet with her hubby--he didn't think she could do it. She made it, however, and I hope she collected! We have since received several good letters back from the group which were so encouraging. Unfortunately, they all want to be on staff!



COLLEGE OF
ST. FRANCIS



You know, we really take good things for granted. So often our bike teams and particularly our staff become so much a family that they fight like family, too. Because of the squabbles there is a tendency to think something is missing. It only takes a little exposure to other sectors of society, however, to realize how good we have it. The staff received high marks from the St. Francis people. So often they commented on what a great group of people the Wheels' staff were. It's good stuff showing off Jesus by simply fixing a flat tire, joking and playing while you do it! "Yeah, I'll do the dishes," or "You go on and I'll clean up." People truly have ears for that kind of thing.



was sixty strong in number and they had their normal good witness. They gave two programs, one in Titusville and one in New Smyrna Beach. A gal from the Titusville congregation stood up and asked for prayer for a group of prisoners to whom she and others had been ministering. She was so struck by the difference between these college kids, free as the wind, singing and being such a positive influence, and the prisoners who, in a real sense, were "caged in", that she was crying. It made me want to sing out and thank God for the **JOY** of being a part of this celebration.



Spring Arbor College
Spring Arbor, Michigan 49283
(517) 750-1200

Snowball and Company escorted the Spring Arbor gang from West Palm Beach northward and had a good run. They shared in a youth meeting on Friday evening before closing out the tour. Rev. Bill McLellan asked them to share with his Church of God congregation. So often what would seem to be going out of ones way winds up being the real substance of the tour.

Our high school kids from Chicago area didn't have any church meetings, but they had good sensitivity to the information shared by the staff. I handled most of the teaching with this group. Don Ferris, youth pastor, and his wife, Char, continue to hang in there giving the kids quality love and leadership. These high schoolers made our fifth biking team and by now I was "pooped"! Saying "goodbye" to the Taylor kids and welcoming sixty-five 14- to 18-year-old-"brats" was almost more than I could handle. I felt like a horse that had been run hard and put away wet!



I soon found myself standing in a supermarket check-out line with Barbi, bless her heart, who had four shopping carts filled to the brim! She was already in the spirit of the new task of cooking for the high schoolers. (Who ever would have thought that food shopping was a gift?) She had enough food to start her own "7-11"! My mind, however, was still on the sixty-five "fun-in-the-sun" Chicagoans who were, on the surface, at least, interested in anything but religious things. When you've been around this age group long enough you really question God's wisdom in ever inventing hair! And how did dead skin ever get to be so



important? Shampoo and conditioners of every brand, hair blowers and electric curlers all made the kids look for anything dripping with water under which they could stick their heads!

As I waited for the bill in the check-out line I killed time by thumbing through People's Magazine. Gary Hart was on the cover, but the real story was in the middle of the magazine. It was about little Trevor Ferrell, an 11-year-old from the suburbs of Philadelphia who was making news! It seems he was watching a TV special about the starving "street people" of the city when he asked his dad to take him into the city to see these people for himself. Father and son, with a few meager items to share with the needy, set out to find the "street people". This soon became a regular practice and their inventory grew. As I read the magazine I realized that not only residents of Philly but

the whole country was praising this mutt of an 11-year-old! I almost cried when I realized I had my inspiration for teaching and encouraging these sixty-five teenagers--all seniors to young Trevor! The story gave me all the encouragement I needed. By the end of the week many of the kids had personally thanked us for their Florida experience. Give me a better way to relate to kids and I'll do it. "Thank you, God!"



BIBLE LANDS

wandering wheels

we could get more people from different lands rubbing shop owner, young and very western in dress, who was his best seller was a T-shirt with "HEBREW UNIVERSITY" printed on it. The Taylor kids adopted him. He followed us everywhere. There is a special truth that surfaces in a relationship like this.

Israel is beginning to feel like home to Wandering Wheels. We had fifty-six on board and what ambassadors they were! This old world would have a heck of a

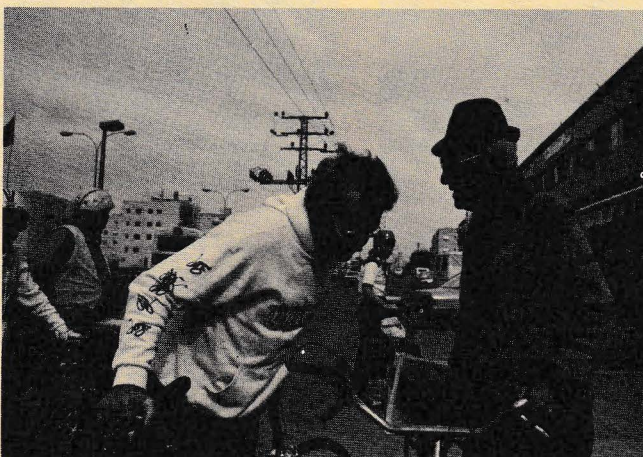
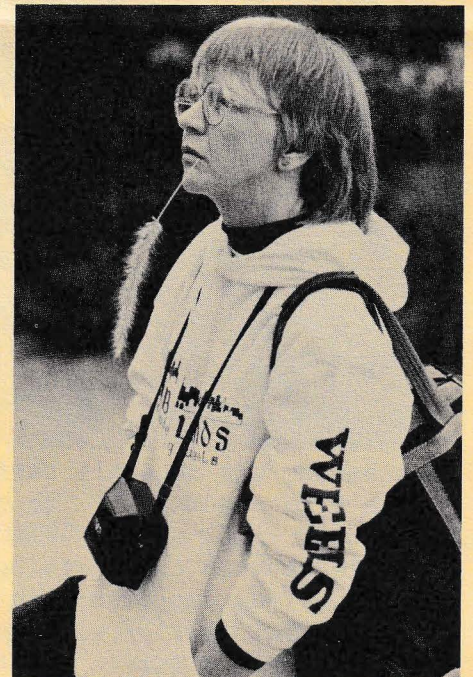


Band-Aid put on it if shoulders. We met one pushing T-shirts. His

Dr. Win Corduan did a good job of keeping the students' minds on the books; Chuck Newman kept us fed and on the right road; and Galen and Phil made their first journey to Israel, as did Sue. I've threatened Sue with making her show her slides at women's meetings and she breaks out

in a cold sweat!!

Wheels has good clout in Israel. The Ministry of Tourism and the Youth Hostel Association have become so helpful and supportive. It's so natural taking the riders to Israel and living our faith. No apologies are needed!



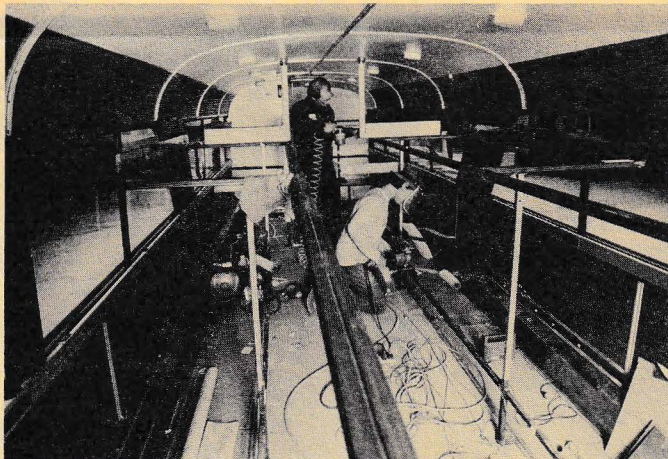
Possum Four's new engine has settled in and Five recently needed a new clutch. It's easy to write these things off in a rather matter of fact way, but a ton of work goes into bringing the equipment around each week. Now



there is a new kid on the block--Possum Six! We already have had to use it "in the rough". Galen is heading up the work of bringing its interior around to match that of Possums Four and Five. He does a master's job in the conversion of the buses. His sidekick, Larry Kleindienst, backs him up nicely. Mike Manganello is the general supervisor and chief



buyer for the interior needs and seems to enjoy the prospects of spending money!



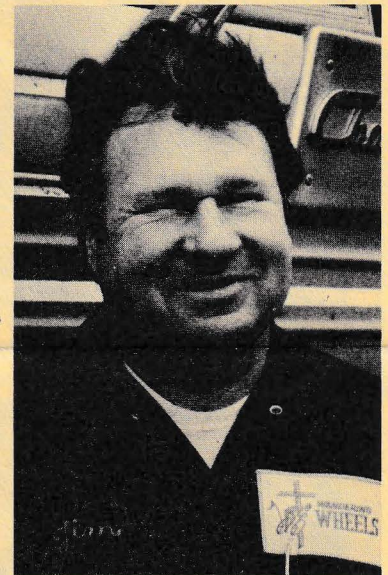
mechanic, has recently retired and now spends two to three days a week in our Wheels' bus garage. He is our answer to prayer! His work frees up the drivers so that they don't have to spend nearly as much time getting the buses mechanically ready for trips. I am confident, in the months to come, that I'll be sharing information with you regarding good things that God is doing in Jim's life. The fact of God is best evidenced in the lives of men and women who seem to do a turn around and manifest a character that simply is in tune with a God-like character.

Jim Gore,
Upland's resident

By the way, our request for HELP regarding the Possum Six project was a success! In fact, we still have money coming in from the call for HELP! In fact, I'm still calling for HELP! We have a loan out on the bus and would like to pay it off as soon as possible. It's a beauty and I trust the pictures will help communicate that to you.



This spring the buses are running back to back. This brings me to a real exciting bit of information. Curt Anderson (L) and Ted Bowers (R), both old Wheels' salts, are coming



back on staff. Yeah! Curt has been in North Carolina with FCA and Ted in Ohio as a part-time farmer and auto body repair man. Both are a couple of years into their marriages so they bring two equally

sharp gals with them. Wheels will do some new stretching with these men back on board.

This letter is getting too long so suffice it to say the Kitchen-Retreat House is used almost nightly. Our artist friend, Tom Thiery, has just finished the second and third paintings to become a part of the growing mural in the Kitchen. This is a picture of one of those paintings.

PRAY



~~DIRT~~ COAST TO COAST leaves here on June 9. This team is coming together slowly. At the writing of this letter we are about ten short of our expected total team number. This trip will open many new doors for us.

~~COAST TO COAST~~ traditional six-week tour leaves Upland June 18. Snowball and a "crack" staff will put this twenty-sixth coast to coast together. It's already filled, so far as riders go. The route will be from San Diego to Rehoboth Beach.



trip slated for August 11-24 is close to being filled. Mile for mile this will be one of the best tours of the summer. Since we still have openings, let us know if you are interested.



We are going to offer a one-week bicycle tour in the D.C. area. This one is just being opened as a result of people wanting a shorter tour. It's intent is to service those who also want a less strenuous trip than the Mountain Run. Plans are to leave here around the ninth or tenth of August.



This trip will be magic! It is open to anyone and people are already signing up for it. Although it will run ten months, we are going to make arrangements for people to join us on a shorter term at different times throughout the trip.

Needless to say, we are continuing to move at a nice pace. I really don't want Wheels to depend heavily on gifts. However, there is such comfort in receiving your support. It simply confirms what we are doing. I'll let you know when we have too much!

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Love and warmest regards,

Bob Davenport, Director

BD/ss